

**Testimony by Bobbi Jo Reale Before the Children's Committee
Opposing HB 6331, An Act Concerning 16-Year-Old Donors
February 21, 2013**

Good afternoon Chairman Bartolomeo, Chairman Urban and members of the Children Committee.

My name is Bobbi Reale and I worked for 14 years as a BSNT, also known as a phlebotomist, for the American Red Cross/Connecticut Blood services Region in Farmington. I am now retired from the Red Cross.

I am here today to express my opposition to House Bill 6331, An Act Concerning 16-Year-Old Donors.

I worked at thousands of blood drive years over the years, collecting their blood. And I can say from experience that 95% of the adverse reactions I witnessed occurred in teenage donors.

Medical studies confirm my own instincts and experience, which is that high school teens have a higher incidence of adverse reactions and injuries.

High school blood drives are an increasing source of activity and revenue for the Red Cross. So I worry about the consequences of expanding the universe to 16 year old donors.

I believe stronger safety and staffing steps must be taken before allowing 16 year olds to donate. For example, The Red Cross has height and weight requirements for high school donors, but does not enforce those requirements by measuring and weighing teens before they donate at blood drives.

For these reasons and more, I urge you to oppose HB 6331. Thank you very much.